

SAUDI ARABIA | IN FOCUS

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF THE INFORMATION OFFICE OF
THE ROYAL EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA IN WASHINGTON, DC



OCTOBER 11, 2011

SAUDI ARABIA

Royal Court: King Abdullah to undergo back surgery

The Royal Court announced on October 11 that the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz will undergo surgery on the advice of his doctors to alleviate lower back pain. During a regular check-up, tests indicated a slackening of the binding connector around the King's third vertebrae. Doctors have determined that it is necessary to conduct surgery in order to re-tighten the connector.

Princess Hissah inaugurates Businesswomen's Forum

Princess Hissah bint Trad Al-Shaalan, the wife of King Abdullah, inaugurated in Riyadh on October 9 the 6th Forum for Businesswomen, entitled "Women: Industrial Investment, A Promising Future." The event was organized by the Women's Branch of Riyadh's Chamber of Commerce and Industry. After touring an exhibition, Princess Hissah noted that the Forum has aided in the activation of women's economic roles, encouraging their entrepreneurship. She expressed pride in the contributions of Saudi women to the progress and development of the Kingdom. Approximately 10,000 businesswomen are participants in the Branch, and more than 1,000 businesswomen from the Kingdom and abroad are participating in the three-day forum.

SAUDI ARABIA-U.S. RELATIONS

Saudi Aramco, Dow sign agreement for joint venture

Saudi Aramco President and Chief Executive Officer Khalid Al-Falih and Dow Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Andrew Liveris signed the Joint Venture (JV) Shareholders' Agreement for the Sadara Chemical Company in Dhahran on October 8. The agreement stipulates that a \$20 billion petrochemical complex will be constructed in Jubail Industrial City. During the signing ceremony, Al-Falih characterized the Sadara venture as a "game-changer in the Kingdom's petrochemical industry." He reported, "Sadara is expected to deliver annual revenues of approximately \$10 billion within a few years of operation, while contributing significantly to Saudi Arabia's industrial diversification." Lauding the new partnership, Al-Falih declared, "As the world's largest integrated and most reliable supplier of energy and petroleum-based derivative products, our strengths complement those of Dow, the world's foremost chemicals company with a global track record and unique suite of chemicals technology." During his

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own remarks, Liveris noted that the joint venture is expected to generate thousands of direct and indirect employment opportunities. "By the end of 2011, Dow and Saudi Aramco are aiming to recruit hundreds of Saudi nationals as the first batch of technical trainees for competitive and unique manufacturing and engineering training programs," he said. Production of a wide range of chemical products is expected to begin in 2015, he added.

SAGIA and Pfizer sign accord for pharmaceutical plant in Rabigh

The Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA) signed an agreement with Pfizer World Company in Riyadh on October 3 to establish a pharmaceutical plant at the King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC) in Rabigh. It will be the company's first such facility in the Middle East. According to the plans, the facility will be built on an area of 65,000 square meters and will employ as many as 200 workers. Construction will begin in 2015. Officials hope that the plant will help transfer pharmaceutical manufacturing skills to the local markets.

ARAB WORLD

Kingdom expresses condolence to victims in Egypt, calls for restraint

In a statement issued on October 9, an official source said that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is following the recent disturbances taking place in the brotherly Republic of Egypt and the deaths of many innocent victims there with pain and sorrow. "The Government and people of the Kingdom offer their deepest condolences to the families of the victims, the Egyptian people, Government and Military Council," the statement read. "The Kingdom, at the same time, appeals to all its brothers in Egypt for self-restraint, the resort to wisdom, and the preservation of their beloved homeland, which is at the heart of the Arab and Islamic world."

FOREIGN AID

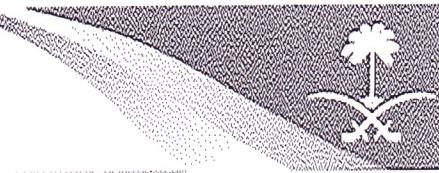
OIC, USAID discuss prospects for cooperation

The Assistant Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Ambassador Atta El-Mannan Bakhit, met in Jeddah on October 10 with Assistant Director General of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Nancy Lindberg and Envoy of the U.S. President to the OIC Rashad Hussein. Ambassador Bakhit briefed the U.S. delegation on the OIC's humanitarian activities, in particular the efforts of the OIC Humanitarian Alliance to assist drought and famine victims in Somalia. The U.S. delegation praised the OIC operations, which have helped to improve conditions in Mogadishu and the surrounding areas. The two sides also discussed prospects for joint cooperation in Somalia and in other Muslim countries.

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OCTOBER 18, 2011

SAUDI ARABIA

King Abdullah undergoes successful back surgery

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz has undergone successful surgery to tighten a binding connector around his third vertebra, the Royal Court said in a statement released on Oct. 17. The surgery took place at King Abdulaziz Medical City in Riyadh.

Plot against Saudi Ambassador condemned around the world

Saudi Arabia strongly condemned the plot to assassinate Saudi Ambassador to the U.S. Adel A. Al-Jubeir and thanked U.S. authorities for uncovering and preventing the terrorist attack. In a statement issued on Oct. 12, the Kingdom denounced the "outrageous and heinous attempt," characterizing it as "not consistent with normal humanitarian values and ethics or with international norms and traditions." The statement added that Saudi Arabia will continue to coordinate with U.S. authorities on the matter while considering the necessary steps to take in response. Finally, it called upon the international community to assume the burden of fighting terrorism.

In the wake of the revelation of the plot, officials around the world have condemned the conspirators. President Barack Obama called Ambassador Al-Jubeir to express solidarity. "President Obama underscored that the United States believes this plot to be a flagrant breach of U.S. and international law. He also underscored the close partnership between the United States and Saudi Arabia," the White House said in a statement. For his part, Vice President Joseph Biden confirmed that the Obama administration is working to rally unified world opinion in support of a possible American response. In a statement, Vice President Biden described the assassination plot as shameful, saying that the Iranians will be held accountable for trying to breach one of the pillars of international relations – the sanctity and safety of diplomats. During a press conference, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called the incident a "reckless act" that "undermines international norms and the international system." She stated, "This plot, very fortunately disrupted by the excellent work of our law enforcement and intelligence professionals, was a flagrant violation of international and U.S. law, and a dangerous escalation."

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FOREIGN RELATIONS

Agreement to establish King Abdullah Center for Dialogue signed

Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal signed an agreement with Austrian Deputy Consultant and Minister of European and International Affairs Dr. Michael Shbendiger and Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Trinidad Khemenes Garcia-Gererya in Vienna on Oct. 13 to establish the International King Abdullah Center for Dialogue (IKACD). According to the agreement, IKACD will support dialogue among followers of religions and cultures, enhance understanding, respect and cooperation among all peoples, promote justice, peace and reconciliation, and confront the use of religion as a cover to hide violence and aggression. A five-member commission representing the five major world religions will be assigned to run the center, which will be patronized by the Ministry of European and International Affairs of Austria.

Emergency meeting of Arab Foreign Ministers held in Cairo

Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al-Faisal led the Saudi delegation in an emergency meeting of the Arab League Council held in Cairo on Oct. 16. The meeting was called in response to the violence in Syria. Addressing the meeting, Arab League Secretary General Dr. Nabil Al-Arabi stated, "The situation in Syria is very grave and requires an immediate halt to killing and violence." He insisted that the Arab League has a responsibility to take a stance regarding the Syrian crisis, noting that his organization was working to launch a comprehensive dialogue between the conflicting parties.

EMBASSY ACTIVITY

U.S. mayoral delegation meets with Saudi officials

Minister of Commerce and Industry Abdullah bin Ahmed Zainal Alireza received a delegation comprised of five U.S. mayors in Riyadh on Oct. 15. During the meeting, the two sides discussed enhancing Saudi-U.S. trade and industrial relations. The delegation, under the auspices of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, is touring the Kingdom in the company of officials from the Saudi Embassy in Washington. Besides meeting with senior government officials, they will meet with business leaders and visit historical and cultural sites, as well developmental and economic projects. During their trip, the mayors are scheduled to meet with Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs Prince Mansour bin Miteb bin Abdulaziz; Riyadh Mayor Prince Abdulaziz bin Mohammed bin Ayyaf; President of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA) Prince Sultan bin Salman; Assistant Speaker of the Majlis Al-Shoura (Consultative Council) Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Barak; and Jeddah Mayor Hani Abu Ras.

The delegation is composed of Mayor Elizabeth Kautz of Burnsville, Minn; Mayor Arlene Mulder of Arlington Heights, Ill; Mayor John Callahan of Bethlehem, Pa;

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Mayor Steve Benjamin of Columbia, S.C.; and Mayor Brenda Lawrence of South Field, Mich.

FOREIGN AID

Saudi Campaign for the Relief of the Pakistani People kicks off projects

The Campaign of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques for the Relief of the Pakistani People launched relief projects on Oct. 13 for victims of flooding in the Sindh and Baluchistan regions. Dr. Khalid Al-Othmani, regional director of the campaign, said in a press conference in Islamabad that the campaign would erect tents for refugees, in addition to distributing 30,000 blankets and 50,000 food baskets. He added that the next phase of the campaign's humanitarian efforts will consist of relief projects, including the construction of water purification stations to provide healthy, potable water.

Saudi Ambassador to Cameroon delivers gift to World Food Program

Saudi Ambassador to Cameroon Mahmoud Gattan delivered 96 tons of dates to the World Food Program (WFP) in Yaoundé. The food aid was a gift from King Abdullah to the people of Cameroon. In a statement, Ambassador Gattan noted that Saudi Arabia has donated 4,000 tons of dates to WFP branches around the world this year. In addition, it donated 100 tons of dates to Cameroon three months ago, as well as 8 tons of vaccines and medicines last month. WFP Representative Jack Roya thanked Saudi Arabia for the dates, stating that the donation will be used for a nutritional program for pregnant women in Cameroon's far north and a school nutritional program.

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Saudi Arabia Makes Donation for Ethiopian Children

WASHINGTON [October 19, 2011] – Yesterday the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) welcomed a donation from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia of dates valued at \$900,000. The donation will provide meals to schoolchildren in Ethiopia through the Food-for-Education programme.

“This contribution is an example of Saudi Arabia’s pledge to alleviate the suffering of people around the world,” said Saudi Ambassador to the United States Adel A. Al-Jubeir. “Saudi Arabia is committed to supporting those in need of humanitarian aid.”

Saudi Arabia is a valued partner of the World Food Programme. Last year, the Kingdom donated more than \$3.6 million worth of assistance to the United Nations food agency, with a third used toward the Food-for-Education programme.

For more information on Saudi Arabia please visit www.saudiembassy.net or follow the Embassy on Twitter @SaudiEmbassyUSA.

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U.S. Mayoral Delegation Visits Saudi Arabia

WASHINGTON [October 21, 2011] – This week U.S. mayors returned from a visit to Saudi Arabia organized by the U.S. Conference of Mayors in coordination with the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Washington, D.C. The visiting mayors spent nearly a week in the Kingdom where they experienced the nation's culture while conducting productive meetings with Saudi officials, business leaders and educators on issues of mutual interest.

"This visit allowed the participating mayors to experience Saudi Arabia first hand," said Saudi Ambassador to the U.S. Adel A. Al-Jubeir. "We look forward to working with the U.S. Conference of Mayors in improving economic relations and cultural exchange through future visits."

The delegation met with Saudi government and business leaders, including the minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs, mayors of Riyadh and Jeddah, president of the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities, assistant speaker of the Majlis Al-Shura (Consultative Council), governor of the Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA) and leaders of the Chambers of Commerce in Riyadh and Jeddah. During these meetings, the parties discussed enhancing Saudi-U.S. trade relations.

In addition, the group also met with educators at Effat College, the non-governmental National Society for Human Rights and members of the Saudi-U.S. Parliamentary Friendship Committee.

The five-day visit concluded on October 19 with a dinner that was attended by business and community leaders and hosted by Khalid Alireza, CEO of Xenel Group.

The delegation was comprised of Mayor Elizabeth Kautz of Burnsville, Minn.; Mayor Arlene Mulder of Arlington Heights, Ill.; Mayor John Callahan of Bethlehem, Pa.; Mayor Steve Benjamin of Columbia, S.C.; and Mayor Brenda Lawrence of South Field, Mich.

For more information on Saudi Arabia, please visit www.saudiembassy.net or follow the Embassy on Twitter @SaudiEmbassyUSA.

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